United Nations S/2012/718

Security Council

Distr.: General
25 September 2012

Original: English

Letter dated 17 September 2012 from the Chair of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict to the President of the Security Council

In my capacity as Chair of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, I have the honour to submit a report on the activities of the Working Group since the submission of its previous report on 30 September 2011.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and the enclosed report issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Peter Wittig

12-52188 (E) 270912

Please recycle

Annual report on the activities of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, established pursuant to resolution 1612 (2005)

(1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012)

I. Introduction

1. On 26 July 2005, the Security Council adopted resolution 1612 (2005) on children and armed conflict.

2. In paragraph 8 of the resolution, the Council decided to establish a working group of the Security Council to review the reports of the mechanism referred to in paragraph 3 of the resolution, to review progress in the development and implementation of the action plans mentioned in paragraph 7 of the resolution and to consider other relevant information presented to it. The Council decided further that the working group should:

(a) Make recommendations to the Council on possible measures to promote the protection of children affected by armed conflict, including through recommendations on appropriate mandates for peacekeeping missions and recommendations with respect to the parties to the conflict;

(b) Address requests, as appropriate, to other bodies within the United Nations system for action to support implementation of the resolution in accordance with their respective mandates.

3. Pursuant to resolution 1612 (2005), the Chair of the Working Group submitted reports to the Council on developments in relation to the Working Group for the periods from 26 July 2005 to 30 June 2006 (S/2006/497), from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 (S/2007/428), from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 (S/2008/455), from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 (S/2009/378), from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010 (S/2010/410), and from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011 (S/2011/610). During the reporting period, the Working Group held two formal meetings, on 30 September 2011 and 31 May 2012. During the same period, the Working Group held approximately 14 informal consultations as well as a number of "informal informals" at the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations, as well as various bilateral meetings.

II. Substantive issues addressed

32nd meeting

4. At its 32nd formal meeting, on 30 September 2011, the Working Group adopted conclusions with respect to the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Iraq (S/2011/366). Those conclusions were issued as a Security Council document on 3 October 2011 (S/AC.51/2011/6). The Chair of the Working Group then carried out the tasks entrusted to him in the context of the conclusions, including by drawing the attention of the Security Council to the need to follow up on the recommendations addressed to it.

5. At the same meeting, the Working Group discussed the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Sudan dated 5 July 2011 (S/2011/413) and heard an update on the situation of children and armed conflict in the Sudan and South Sudan. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report and recalled its main conclusions:

(a) Advances had been made during the reporting period by national authorities in addressing violations and abuses against children, through strengthened legislative frameworks and other practical measures for child protection. Some progress had also been made in the dialogue and the signing of action plans with parties to the conflict, and in the release of children;

(b) Particular concern was expressed regarding the continued violations and abuses committed against children by all parties to the conflict in the Sudan and South Sudan, including the continued recruitment and use of children by armed groups, as well as the killing and maiming of children, sexual violence, abduction, attacks on schools and hospitals, and the denial of humanitarian access;

(c) Combating impunity for all violations and abuses was a priority and response efforts undertaken by national and international actors to address those violations were outlined in the report.

6. During the meeting, the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations presented the views of his Government. The Permanent Representative of South Sudan to the United Nations was not able to participate in the subsequent discussion, but instead submitted a written statement on the Secretary-General's report (S/2011/413). The Working Group then held an exchange of views and, following the discussion, the experts were given the task of negotiating draft conclusions of the Group that would provide concrete follow-up to the report. The members of the Working Group stressed the need for two separate reports and conclusions for the Sudan and South Sudan following the independence of South Sudan in July 2011.

7. The main elements of the statements of the Permanent Representative of the Sudan and of the Permanent Representative of South Sudan, as well as the exchange of views among the members of the Working Group, will be reflected in the summary contained in the conclusions.

8. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General then gave an update on the progress made by the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M) in implementing the action plan for the discharge of disqualified Maoist personnel (minors) and outlined measures to be undertaken by UCPN-M in order to be delisted from the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict.

9. The Deputy Executive Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) then presented the Secretary-General's global horizontal note for May and June 2011.

33rd meeting

10. At its 33rd formal meeting, on 31 May 2012, the Working Group discussed the report of the Secretary-General on the situation of children and armed conflict in Colombia dated 21 March 2012 (S/2012/171). The Special Representative of the

Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the Secretary-General's report and recalled its main conclusions:

(a) Progress had been made by the Government of Colombia in preventing and responding to the recruitment and use of children, including through the development of a framework document (CONPES 3673) by the National Council on Economic and Social Policy;

(b) Violations and abuses continued to be committed against children by the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN);

(c) Impunity for violations and abuses against children in armed conflict continued to be of grave concern, and continued efforts for the timely, rigorous and systematic investigation and prosecution of those cases were needed.

11. During the meeting, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Colombia presented the views of his Government. The Working Group then held an exchange of views and, following the discussion, the experts were given the task of negotiating draft conclusions of the Group that would provide concrete follow-up to the Secretary-General's report.

12. The main elements of the statement made by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Colombia, as well as the exchange of views among the members of the Working Group, will be reflected in the conclusions.

13. Also at its 33rd meeting, the Working Group discussed the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Sri Lanka dated 21 December 2011 (S/2011/793). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report and recalled its main conclusions:

(a) Since the end of the armed conflict in Sri Lanka in May 2009, no further cases of recruitment and use of children nor conflict-related killing and maiming had been reported to the Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting;

(b) Progress had been achieved in separating children from Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP) and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and reintegrating them into society, and in tracing children who had been separated from their parents in the final stages of the conflict. In particular, the Government was developing a plan to undertake tracing activities in hospitals, children's homes and police posts through the country;

(c) However, additional measures were needed to further such efforts. Concerns remained regarding the need to establish accountability for the recruitment and use of children by remnants of TMVP.

14. The Deputy Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka presented the views of his Government. The Working Group then held an exchange of views and, following the discussion, the experts were given the task of negotiating draft conclusions of the Group that would provide concrete follow-up to the Secretary-General's report.

15. The main elements of the statement made by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka, as well as the exchange of views among the members of the Working Group, will be reflected in the conclusions.

16. The Deputy Executive Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes of UNICEF then presented the Secretary-General's global horizontal note for January and February 2012.

17. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General then briefed the Working Group on the situation of children in Mali, the Syrian Arab Republic and Libya.

18. During the reporting period, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General also briefed members of the Working Group, during its informal consultations on the situation of children in Syria[1] and on her visit to South Sudan in March 2012.[2]

19. The Secretariat made available to the Working Group a United Nations E-Room, which allows members to access the institutional memory of the Working Group with a user ID and password.

20. During the consideration of the present annual report, certain members expressed the wish to streamline the format of the report. To that effect, after an exchange of views, the Working Group agreed to discuss the format of its annual report prior to the preparation of its next report.

[1] Informal consultations on 15 February 2012.

[2] Informal consultations on 30 March 2012.